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EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCER

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5 April 1968

EE Reaction to Hanoi's Statement

Yesterday, the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry issued an official statement on Vietnam which stated in part that Czechoslovakia could be the scene of talks between representatives from Hanoi and Washington, should the adversaries so desire.

Elsewhere, most Eastern European press media continue to contrast the "elasticity" of Hanoi's policies with the rigidity of Washington's approach to deescalating the Vietnamese conflict. Despite this characterization, however, caution remains the dominant undertone of most EE press reaction.

Communist information media in Rumania, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia continue their relatively objective coverage of peace efforts in Vietnam.

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Yugoslav Official Attacks Conditions in Poland

During talks with a US embassy official, a prominent Yugoslav official criticized Polish leaders for failing to face the realities of the need for change. According to the source, the current discontent within the Polish Party reflects growing resentment against officials who came to Poland from the USSR or the West after the Second World War and now occupy positions of prominence. The source added

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that in addition to the struggle against "subversives," "political provocateurs," and high clergy of the Catholic Church, the party is embroiled in an examination of its own weaknesses, mistakes and errors. The question of democratization of party life is also being widely aired.

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COMMENT: This report typifies the approach of the Yugoslavs to the events in Poland.

Opposition Grows to Hungarian-Czechoslovak Tolls on Danube Traffic

Opposition to the Czechoslovak-Hungarian plan to introduce tolls on the Danube between Rajka and Gonyu is reportedly beginning to spread. The Austrians initially voiced their objection at the 12 March meeting of the Danube Commission in Budapest and warned that this move "would fully eliminate the practice of free Danube shipping." The Austrian press also claims that an Austrian proposal that the tolls be postponed until they can be studied by a committee of experts next October has received support from Rumania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and the USSR. Austrian shipping companies have refused to fill out forms which were to serve as a basis for assessment of tolls. The Austrians may be planning to request arbitration.

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COMMENT: The Hungarians and Czechoslovaks claim that the original Danube Convention of 1948 provides for possible tolls on this stretch of the Danube.

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NOTE: THE VIEWS EXPRESSED ABOVE REPRESENT  
ONLY THE ANALYSIS OF THE EE DIVISION

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